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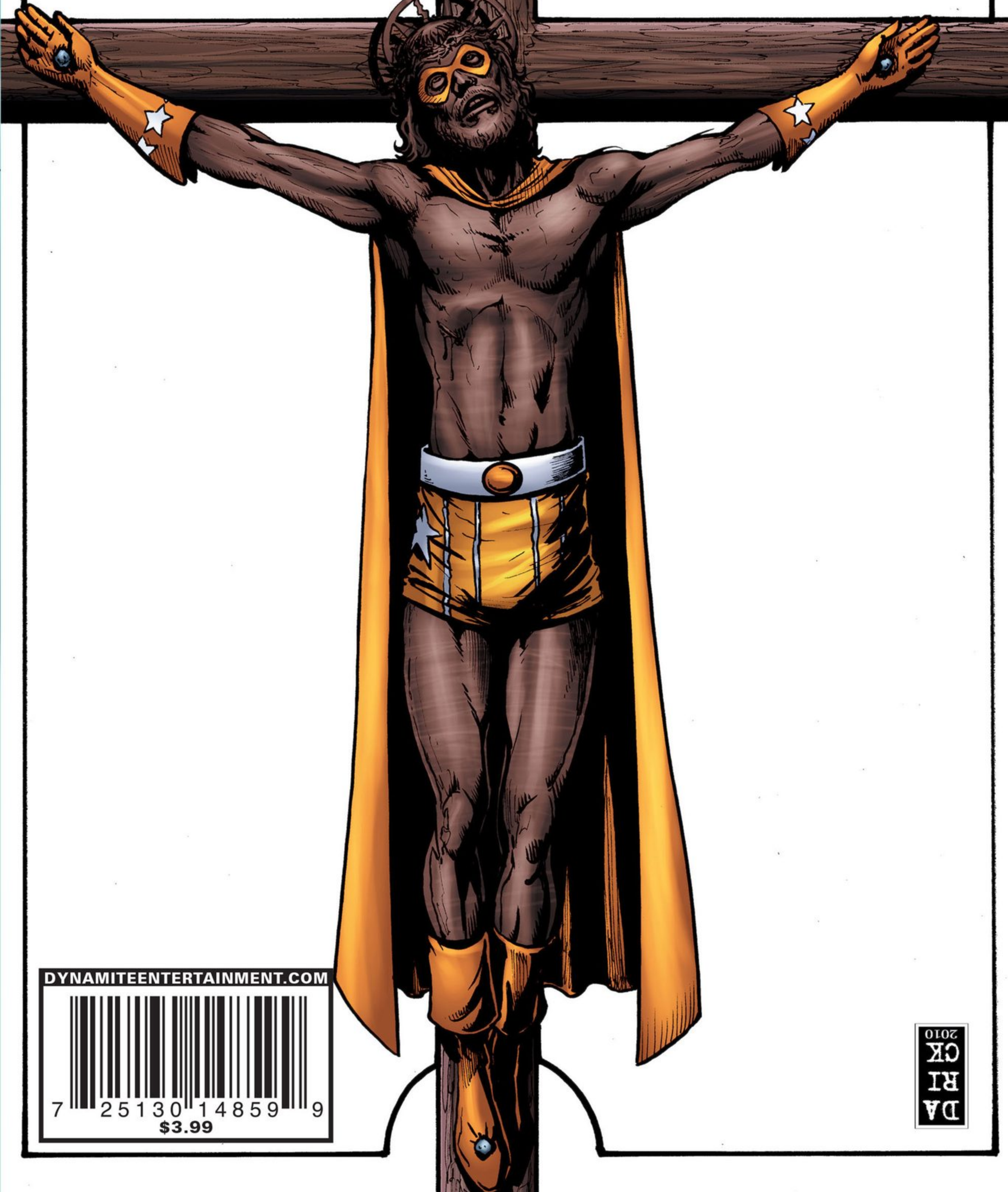
Garth Ennis Russ Braun Darick Robertson

The BOYS™

FORTY-FOUR



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Garth Ennis Darick Robertson

The BOYS™

FORTY-FOUR

In a world where costumed heroes soar through the sky and masked vigilantes prowl the night, someone's got to make sure the "supes" don't get out of line. And someone will.

Billy Butcher, Wee Hughie, Mother's Milk, The Frenchman and The Female are The Boys: a CIA-backed team of very dangerous people, each one dedicated to the struggle against the most lethal force on Earth- superpower. Some superheroes have to be watched. Some have to be controlled. And some of them- sometimes- need to be taken out of the picture.

That's when you call in **The Boys**.

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I BELIEVE, WHEN I GIVE MY HEART, TO GOD IT WILL BE FOREVER

I BELIEVE, WHEN I GIVE MY SOUL, TO CHRIST IT WILL BE FOREVER

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I BELIEVE, WHEN I GIVE MY SOUL, TO CHRIST IT WILL BE FOREVER

I BELIEVE.

I ALWAYS HAVE.

BECAUSE THERE'S A **POWER.** IN OUR **WORLD.** THAT MAKES THE **GREATEST SUPERHERO...**

SEEM SO SMALL.

I **BELIEVE** IN GOD. I **BELIEVE** IN THE LOVE OF CHRIST OUR SAVIOUR. AND I KNOW THAT I MUST-- **SPREAD THE WORD.**

THIS **SUNDAY.** IN **CENTRAL PARK.** IN **NEW YORK CITY.**

THE **BELIEVE** MINISTRIES...CAPES FOR CHRIST, THE REDEEMERS, SIDEKICK TWELVE, THE JESUS LEAGUE OF AMERICANS...

AND MANY **MORE.** WILL JOIN TOGETHER.

AND CELEBRATE THE LOVE THAT MAKES US ONE.

SO COME ALONG. BRING THE FAMILY. GO TO **DOUBLEYOU-DOUBLEYOU-DOUBLEYOU DOT BELIEVE DOT COM NOW,** AND GET YOUR ALL-DAY EVENT **GOLD PASS** AT A SPECIAL **REDUCED RATE.**

YOU'LL HAVE A CHANCE TO MEET SOME OF YOUR **FAVORITE HEROES--** IN A DAY OF **WORSHIP** YOU'LL **NEVER FORGET.**

BELIEVE

part one

HOW DO YOU FEEL?

SAFE FROM THE WORLD.

LIKE I COULD DISAPPEAR INTO YOU AN' BE HAPPY FOREVER.

HMH.

YOU SAY BEAUTIFUL THINGS TO ME.

I LOVE YOU.

I FOUND YOU.

YOU DID. YOU FOUND ME.

YOU FOUND ME, YOU FOUND ME, YOU FOUND ME.

ISN'T IT JUST THE BEST THING *EVER?*

I LOVE THAT THEORY OF YOUR BOSS'S.

HE DOES HAVE HIS MOMENTS, AYE.

BUT I'M A LOT LESS HAPPY WITH HIM AFTER THE ACCIDENT, HE SHOULDN'T BE SENDING YOU TO PLACES WHERE YOU CAN FALL THROUGH THE STAIRS OF SOME BUILDING...

FELL DOWN THEM. I PUT MY FOOT THROUGH ONE AN' WENT ARSE-OVER-TIT DOWN THE REST O' THEM. THEN I WENT THROUGH THE GLASS DOOR.

TO BE HONEST WITH YOU, IT WAS MORE SORTA SHOCKIN' THAN ANYTHIN' ELSE...

YOU CRACKED YOUR RIBS, YOU LOST TWO TEETH. YOU HAD ALL THOSE AWFUL LITTLE CUTS.

I CAN'T BELIEVE HE'S MAKING YOU GO BACK TO WORK SO SOON.

HONESTLY, HEN, I'M FINE. I'M GOIN' BUCK DAFT SITTIN' AROUND HERE ANYWAY.

JUST CAN'T WAIT TO GET BACK TO THAT WHITE-HOT INSURANCE-INVESTIGATING ACTION...

AH, YOU'VE NEVER DONE IT. YOU'LL NEVER KNOW THE THRILL O' THE HUNT.

WHAT ABOUT YOU, ARE YOU STILL TALKIN' ABOUT QUITTIN'?

SOON.

SOON?

SOON.

IT'S FUNNY, I'VE NEVER SEEN WHERE YOU WORK. I'VE NO' MET ANY O' THE FOLK YOU WORK WITH, EITHER.

WELL, I'VE NEVER MET ANY OF YOURS.

IT'S KIND OF COOL, I THINK. IT'S LIKE WE HAVE A SECRET THAT ONLY WE SHARE.

AYE, EXCEPT YOURS IS THAT YOU'RE SEEIN' THIS DESPERATE-LOOKIN' SCOTS DWARF WI' A CLUB FOOT AN' A HUMP, AN' YOU DON'T WANT YOUR SOPHISTICATED FASHION FRIENDS TO SEE YOU WITH HIM...

THEY WOULDN'T UNDERSTAND HIM ANYWAY. BABBLING AWAY IN HIS WEIRD FOREIGN GIBBERISH.

TRUE ENOUGH.

YOUR SECRET...LET ME SEE IF I CAN PUT THIS IN PROPER BRIT...

YOU CAN'T BELIEVE YOU'VE ***PULLED OFF*** THIS ***BIG BLONDE CRUMPET.*** YOU'RE SCARED ONE OF YOUR ***MATES*** WILL ***NICK*** HER FROM YOU.

AND... ***JINGS,*** OR SOMETHING.

AH, LOST CONTROL AT THE END THERE, HEN. VERY AMATEURISH.

YOU'RE ABOUT HALFWAY THERE. YOU DON'T PULL SOMEONE OFF, THAT'D BE TERRIBLE--YOU JUST PULL THEM. AN' CRUMPET'S PLURAL ON ITS OWN, YOU'RE MEANT TO SAY ***BIT*** O' CRUMPET.

LASTLY, AN' THIS MAY JUST BE A MATTER O' TASTE, ***NICK*** IS USUALLY FOLLOWED WI' ***OFF***--AS IN NICK SOMETHIN' OFF SOMEONE, NO' FROM TH--

DO YOU HAVE TIME FOR A QUICKIE BEFORE WORK?

...AYE...

WELL YOU CAN TELL BY THE WAY I USE MY WALK...

I'M A WOMAN'S MAN, NO TIME TO TALK!

MM-HM HMM HM-HM HM-HMM, MM-HM HMM HM-HM MM-HM MM-HMM...

AND NOW IT'S ALL RIGHT! IT'S OKAY!

YOU CAN LOOK THE--

OH.

THERE YOU ARE.

THANK YOU.

THANK *YOU*, SIR!

I WANTED TO GO OVER THE AGENDA FOR ***BELIEVE*** ON SATURDAY...

OH, I DON'T WANT TO DO THAT SHIT...!

REALLY?

MISTER HOMELANDER?

IT'S ALL SUCH FUCKING BULLSHIT...THOSE PEOPLE, THOUSANDS OF THOSE PATHETIC FUCKING PEOPLE, STANDING LOOKING AT YOU LIKE SHEEP WAITING TO TAKE IT UP THE ASS...

MISTER HOMELANDER, CAN I BRING YOU A REFRESHMENT?

DON'T BOTHER THE VERTEBRATES, TOEJAM.

YOU *BETCHA,* MY LADY!

IT'S A POINT OF VIEW, I SUPPOSE. BUT YOU'VE BEEN DOING BELIEVE FOR YEARS, WHAT'S CHANGED?

I THINK I'VE GOT BETTER THINGS TO DO WITH MY TIME THAN THIS GARBAGE, IS ALL...

WELL, AS I SAY: WHAT'S CHANGED?

WHAT...?

OH, HI.

AH, STARLIGHT, I WANTED TO SEE YOU TOO. IT'S ABOUT THE BELIEVE EVENT, YOU'RE GOING TO BE APPEARING ON BEHALF OF CAPES FOR CHRIST.

OH...NO. NO, I'M SORRY, I CAN'T DO THAT ANYMORE.

SORRY.

YOU TOO...

I'M AFRAID I'M NOT A CHRISTIAN ANYMORE, I HAVEN'T BEEN FOR A WHILE. SO IT WOULDN'T BE RIGHT FOR ME TO ATTEND BELIEVE.

IF YOU DON'T TURN UP YOU'LL UPSET A LOT OF PEOPLE WHOSE FAITH IS STILL INTACT, HAVE YOU CONSIDERED THAT?

A SOMEWHAT ACADEMIC--

BELIEVE HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH FAITH. FAITH SHOULD BE A COMFORT TO PEOPLE, NOT A CRUTCH.

IT SHOULDN'T PUT SUCH A STRAIN ON THEIR WALLETS, EITHER.

WHAT SHE SAID.

REALLY?

NO, NOT REALLY. NOT EVEN REMOTELY.

STARLIGHT, I'M AFRAID I HAVE TO INSIST. YOU'RE REPRESENTING CAPES FOR CHRIST--AS A MATTER OF FACT, YOU'RE GOING TO HEAD UP CAPES FOR CHRIST. YOU'VE BEEN PROMOTED TO MINISTER WITHIN THE BELIEVE STRUCTURE.

WE'VE TALKED ABOUT UPPING YOUR PUBLIC PROFILE; THIS IS THE PERFECT PLACE TO BEGIN.

OH NO--NO, WAIT A MINUTE-- NO, I DON'T ***WANT*** MY PROFILE UPPED--!

QUITE FORTUNATE THAT YOU WENT BACK TO THE OLD COSTUME, ACTUALLY. MUCH MORE APPROPRIATE.

NO...!

AS I SAY, I HAVE TO INSIST.

I REALLY DON'T UNDERSTAND WHAT THE PROBLEM IS HERE...

WHAT ABOUT IF I INSISTED TOO, WOULD THAT MAKE THINGS ANY CLEARER?

OH.

I SEE.

YES, I DO SEE.

COOCH!

AM I TO TAKE IT THAT THE SEVEN'S RELATIONSHIP WITH VOUGHT-AMERICAN IS UNDER SOME KIND OF REVIEW?

THAT MEANS YOU'RE DOING IT.

BOTH OF YOU.

FUCKING A-RIGHT IT MEANS YOU'RE DOING IT...

SO.

SHALL WE GET DOWN TO BRASS TACKS?

ALL RIGHT, MATE?

MM.

WHAT'RE WE MEETIN' HERE FOR, THEN?

OH AYE.

CHRIST, WOULD YOU LOOK AT THAT SHITE? SUPES AN' RELIGION, THE TWO WORST FUCKIN' THINGS ON THE PLANET: WHAT AN ABSOLUTELY BRILLIANT IDEA...

HUGHIE, WHAT WERE YOU FUCKIN' DOIN', HAVIN' A GO AT MALCHEMICAL THERE?

I...

I WASN'T GONNA GIVE YOU A BOLLOCKIN' WHILE YOU WAS IN HOSPITAL. BUT NOW IT'S TIME TO GO BACK TO WORK.

WANNA SIT DOWN?

I JUST--LOOK, FOR CHRIST'S SAKE, HE WAS GONNA RAPE THEM. MALCHEMICAL, HE WAS GONNA MAKE THOSE TWO WEE LASSIES SUCK HIM OFF, THE FUCKIN' DISGUSTIN' PRICK...

DONE A FUCKSIGHT WORSE'N THAT IN HIS TIME. YOU READ THE FILE.

AYE, BUT NO' IN FRONTA *ME*--!

YOU KNOW AS WELL AS I DO, THEY WERE NO DIFFERENT TO KIDS! AN' HE WAS GONNA DO THAT TO THEM WI' THE REST WATCHIN'--HE WAS GONNA ***RAPE THEM,*** I MEAN DO YOU EVEN KNOW WHAT THAT MEANS...?

YEAH, I THINK I MIGHT HAVE AN INKLIN'.

AW FUCK.

SORRY.

SIT DOWN, WILL YOU? YOU'RE GIVIN' ME A FUCKIN' CRICK IN ME NECK.

I REALLY AM SORRY...

DIDN'T YOU LEARN ANYTHIN' AFTER G-WIZ? I'M NOT TALKIN' ABOUT RISKIN' YOUR FUCKIN' LIFE, I'M TALKIN' ABOUT NOT GETTIN' ***INVOLVED*** WITH THESE NOBBERS...!

I KNOW. I KNOW. WE'RE NO' HERE TO SAVE ANYONE, YOU TOLD ME THAT BEFORE.

BUT I'M SORRY, I JUST COULDN'T SIT BACK AN' LET HIM DO THAT TO THEM...

THEY'RE SUPES, HUGHIE. ONE O' THESE DAYS YOU'RE GONNA WAKE UP AN' SEE THEY'RE ALL THE SAME.

WELL, I DUNNO ABOUT THAT, NOW.

I HAVE TO SAY, I THOUGHT YOU'D BE A LOT MORE PISSED OFF ABOUT IT THAN YOU SEEM TO BE.

'COS I'M RELIEVED YOU DIDN'T GET KILLED, YOU TIT.

WELL, I'VE YOU TO THANK FOR THAT. BUT WHAT WERE YOU DOIN' THERE ANYWAY, LIKE?

COULDN'T BELIEVE WHAT YOU WERE TELLIN' ME ABOUT SUPERDUPER. COME DOWN TO SEE WHAT THE HELL YOU WERE PLAYIN' AT.

AT EIGHT IN THE MORNIN'?

UP WITH THE LARK, MATE. YOU KNOW ME.

'COURSE, IT AIN'T GONNA BE TOO HARD FOR VOUGHT TO SUSS WHAT HAPPENED, NOT AFTER THEY TALK TO YOUR NEW MATES. TWO BLOKES FITTIN' OUR DESCRIPTIONS, TALKIN' THE WAY WE DO...

BY THE WAY, THAT WAS IT, WASN'T IT? YOU DIDN'T'VE ANYTHIN' MORE TO DO WITH 'EM THAN THAT?

EH? OH NO.

"NO, DEFINITELY NOT."

S'POSE THAT'S SOMETHIN'.

WELL, WE OWED THE CUNTS ONE FOR PAYBACK, ANYWAY. MALCHEMICAL OUGHTA FIT THE BILL.

BUT, BUT PAYBACK ALL GOT KILLED...

YEAH, BUT VOUGHT SICCED 'EM ON US, DON'T FORGET.

AYE. WELL, ANYWAY, SUPERDUPER'S ALL OVER AN' DONE WITH--WHAT ABOUT, UH, WHAT ABOUT ***BELIEVE?***

WELL, IT'S ONE O' THESE THINGS WHERE YOU WORK YER WAY UP THROUGH THE LEVELS O' FAITH-- WITH MONEY. SINS FORGIVEN AT EACH NEW LEVEL.

NICE LITTLE EARNER FOR ALL CONCERNED, REALLY.

VOUGHT-AMERICAN MAKE A FORTUNE...

THE SUPES GET EVEN MORE O' THE HOI-POLLOI THINKIN' THEY'RE GOD'S GIFT-- LITERALLY...

AN' ***WE*** DO A BIT O' MINGLIN', AN' SEE IF ANYONE LETS THEIR GUARD DOWN. PICKED UP SOME VERY JUICY TIT-BITS AT THIS, OVER THE YEARS.

THINK YOU CAN HANDLE A BIT O' LIGHT SNOOPIN'? WITHOUT DOIN' YOUR GOOD SAMARITAN BIT?

FOR FUCK'S SAKE...

NO, SERIOUSLY: QUEEN MAEVE SHOWS UP, YOU AIN'T GONNA BE GOIN'--'SCUSE ME, YOUR LADYSHIP, D'YOU NEED ANY HELP GETTIN' YER BRA ON?

NAH, 'COURSE YOU AIN'T.

THAT'S A TWO-MAN JOB AT THE VERY LEAST.

WHYYYYYYYY

WHYYYYYYYY

WHYYYYYY

WHY CAN'T I--

WHY CAN'T I DO THE THINGS I CAN DO...?

IS--

IS SOMEONE THERE?

'FUCK IS YOUR PROBLEM?

NOTHING!

312...313...314

ALWAYS ROOM FOR ONE MO

...NAH, JOHN WAYNE. HE SOUNDED MORE LIKE JOHN WAYNE.

CLINT EASTWOOD.

BOLLOCKS, FRENCHIE...!

YOU'RE ONLY SAYIN' THAT 'COS HE LOOKED A BIT LIKE CLINT. HE DIDN'T SOUND NOTHIN' LIKE HIM.

HE LOOKED MORE LIKE XAVIER AUGUSTIN, I THINK. BESIDES, HE WAS FROM CALIFORNIA-- SO IS CLINT.

YEAH, BUT SO WAS THE DUKE. AN' WHO THE FUCK'S XAVIER AUGUSTIN WHEN HE'S AT HOME?

HE WAS THE BAGUETTE APOLOGIST IN MY VILLAGE. A BRILLIANT MAN.

WELL HOW AM I MEANT TO BLEEDIN' WELL KNOW WHAT HE--ALL RIGHT, NEVER MIND.

HERE, M.M: WHO D'YOU RECKON MALLORY USED TO SOUND MORE LIKE, JOHN WAYNE OR CLINT EASTWOOD?

HE SOUNDED LIKE SOMEONE KNEW WHAT THE FUCK HE WAS DOIN'.

GIVE US A MINUTE, WILL YOU, FRENCHIE...?

D'ACCORD.

LET'S HAVE IT, THEN.

YOU APOLOGIZE TO THAT BOY YET?

WELL HARDLY...I MEAN IF I DID THAT, I'D HAVE TO TELL HIM WHAT I WAS SORRY FOR, WOULDN'T I?

IF HE KNOWS I SET HIM UP 'COS I THOUGHT HE WAS WITH VOUGHT, HE'S GONNA WANNA KNOW WHY. AN' I DON'T WANT HIM KNOWIN' I KNOW HE'S SHAGGIN' THE STARLIGHT BIRD, 'COS I HAVEN'T WORKED OUT HOW TO USE IT YET.

SHE'S IN THE SEVEN, THERE'S NO WAY WE CAN JUST LET THAT ONE GO BY...

HE DON'T KNOW HE'S FUCKIN' THE BITCH. HE THINKS HE'S FUCKIN' SOMEONE CALLED ANNIE JANUARY.

HOW 'BOUT IF SHE TELLS HIM OR HE FIGURES IT OUT FOR HIMSELF, YOU GIVEN ANY THOUGHT TO HOW HE'S GONNA FEEL THEN?

LIKE A RIGHT TWAT, PROBABLY. BUT HOW'S HE GONNA FEEL ANY BETTER IF HE GETS THE NEWS FROM ME?

THAT AIN'T THE POINT...

THE *POINT* IS TO HIT THE SUPES, AS HARD AS WE CAN WHENEVER WE CAN. I'LL COME CLEAN WITH HUGHIE WHEN THE DUST SETTLES.

I'LL MAKE IT UP TO HIM.

ALL RIGHT?

BELIEVE

HAVE YOU SEEN WHAT THEY'RE DOIN' IN OUR PARK...?

MM.

IS IT OKAY IF WE GO SOMEWHERE ELSE? I'M NOT REALLY COMFORTABLE WITH THIS STUFF.

OH, DOES IT REMIND YOU OF BEIN' RELIGIOUS?

I JUST... I DON'T LIKE IT, THAT'S ALL.

SO I HAVE A STUPID LITTLE WORRY...

TELL US YOUR STUPID LITTLE WORRY.

WELL...I WAS THINKING ABOUT THIS MORNING. I SAID I LOVE YOU AND YOU DIDN'T SAY IT BACK.

OH...

AND I WAS TRYING TO REMEMBER, AND YOU HAVEN'T SAID IT SINCE PENN STATION, BEFORE YOU WENT AWAY. THAT WAS THE ONE AND ONLY TIME.

AND...

AW, ANNIE.

THERE IS A REASON FOR IT, BUT IT'S NO' WHAT YOU THINK. I'M NO' HAVIN' SECOND THOUGHTS.

IT'S JUST THAT THE LAST TIME I GOT TO THE... THE I-LOVE-YOU STAGE WI' SOMEONE...

SOMETHIN' BAD HAPPENED. SOMETHIN' REALLY TERRIBLE.

OH, HUGHIE--!

OH, I'M SORRY, I'M SO STUPID--!

NO YOU'RE NO'.

THIS IS THE GIRL, ISN'T IT, THE GIRL WHO--WHO GOT--

HUGHIE, REALLY, YOU CAN TALK ABOUT IT IF YOU WANT. YOU CAN TELL ME STUFF LIKE THIS, I WON'T FREAK OUT BECAUSE IT'S ABOUT ANOTHER GIRL.

...AYE.

AYE, YOU'RE RIGHT. WE SHOULDN'T'VE STUFF WE KEEP FROM EACH OTHER, SHOULD WE?

HER NAME WAS ROBIN. ROBIN MAWHINNEY.

BABY...

AN' SHE GOT KILLED...WHEN ONE SUPERHERO SMASHED ANOTHER INTO A BRICK WALL.

A SUPERHERO.

IT HAPPENS MORE'N YOU'D THINK. THEY'RE RIGHT BASTARDS, SUPES, MOST FOLK DON'T KNOW A FRACTION O' THE SHITE THEY GET UP TO.

ROBIN GOT CRUSHED BETWEEN THE GUY AN' THE WALL. THE OTHER ONE JUST FUCKED OFF, HE DIDN'T CARE WHAT HE'D DONE AT ALL.

I, AH...I REMEMBER I ASKED YOU ABOUT SUPERHEROES THAT TIME, YOU SAID YOU DIDN'T REALLY CARE EITHER WAY.

I DIDN'T WANNA TALK ABOUT IT. FOR OBVIOUS REASONS, LIKE.

THIS PRICK WAS ONE O' THE BIG BOYS, ACTUALLY. HE'S IN THE SEVEN, HIS NAME'S ***A-TRAIN.***

ANNIE?

I HAVE TO.

EVERYTHING'S HAPPENING TODAY.

I HAVE TO.

ANNIE, WHAT'S THE MATTER?

ANNIE?

HUGHIE, I'M A SUPERHERO.

next:
HONESTY BEING THE BEST POLICY...